

Enthusiasm Makes Wellness Work

Initiative in Brief

One of the key components of a worksite wellness program is enthusiastic and supportive leadership. Missy Best, Human Resource Specialist, provides that for Fabiano's wellness committee. Her enthusiasm coupled with the support that the committee received from the owners has helped to create a culture of wellness at Fabianos.

Every January Fabiano sponsors a "kick-off" to wellness. Someone from the local hospital comes onsite and does a health risk appraisal and health screening. Every year they have identified someone with a serious health problem, such as hypertension or diabetes. The health screening has even prompted major lifestyle changes. "We had one person lose 40 pounds and keep it off. [That person] is now a 'gym rat,'" said Best. Participation in the screening and assessment continues to grow each year.

They also have a *Get Healthy Contest*. For three months, participants make lifestyle changes to achieve or maintain a healthy weight. Some employees joined *Weight Watchers*, but most everyone just cuts back on junk food or gets more physical activity. A male and female winner will be determined and they both will win a free membership to a gym of their choice.

Fabiano Brothers also uses payroll deduction for corporate memberships to a gym. "If someone is not feeling well they can have accidents. When we feel good, we think better," said Best. Fabiano has a "Transition Program" that provides employees physical therapy after an injury, with the option of an additional three months to a gym to continue their rehabilitation. "Most everyone improves, so we're all winners," said Best.

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Benefits

Noted benefits of the program are:

- Increased morale and decreased worker's compensation claims.
- Decreased absenteeism among employees.
- Competition motivates employees to make lifestyle changes.



Lunch boxes were distributed to employees with examples of healthy lunch ideas.

Lessons Learned

- Employees are well worth the investment. You will get back what you put into the program.
- Listen to what people need and want. You don't have to spend a ton of money; be creative.
- Surround the employees with positive influences. When you are surrounded by positive influences nine hours of your workday, it is easier to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Cost: Health risk appraisals-\$32-36 per person, gym membership \$100-150 each, pedometers, lunch boxes, flu shots
Risk Factor: Overweight, other chronic disease risk factors, physical inactivity
Impact/Reach: Approximately 70% of employees
Business/Sector: Wholesale/Distribution